

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AF-10 /090 W
-----016365 100448Z /11

R 091625Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3455
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 10773

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, IT, US
SUBJ: VIEWS OF PCI OFFICIAL

SUMMARY. DURING A LENGTHY CONVERSATION, A SENIOR ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI) OFFICIAL SUGGESTED THAT THE PARTY IS CONCERNED ABOUT CERTAIN WEAKNESSES IN ITS FOREIGN POLICY AND NOTED THE NEED TO BRING IT MORE INTO LINE WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF BEING NEITHER ANTI-SOVIET NOR ANTI-AMERICAN. THE PCI EXPECTS A SIZEABLE NUMBER OF VOTES IN FAVOR OF THE TWO REFERENDA PROPOSALS FOR ABROGATION OF THE SO-CALLED LEGGE REALE AND PUBLIC FINANCING OF POLITICAL PARTIES, ALTHOUGH IT DOES NOT ANTICIPATE THAT THIS WILL DESTABILIZE THE PRESENT POLITICAL BALANCE. THE PCI FINDS ITSELF FACING MAJOR PROBLEMS ALTHOUGH THE OFFICIAL BELIEVES THAT THE

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PARTY WOULD MAKE A SERIOUS MISTAKE IN SHIFTING ITS STRATEGY. THE PCI EXPECTS MAJOR CHANGES ON THE ITALIAN POLITICAL SCENE IN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBOFF HAD FIRST CONTACT ON JUNE 7 WITH ON. ALFREDO REICHLIN, A PCI DIRECTORATE MEMBER AND EDITOR OF THE OFFICIAL PARTY DAILY L'UNITA. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CONVER-

SATION FOLLOW.

2. FOREIGN POLICY. REICHLIN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE ARE SERIOUS WEAKNESSES IN CURRENT PCI FOREIGN POLICY, AND HE INDICATED THAT THE PARTY IS SEEKING WAYS OF BRINGING IT MORE IN LINE WITH THE STATED OBJECTIVE OF BEING NEITHER ANTI-SOVIET NOR ANTI-AMERICAN. CONCERNING AFRICAN DEVELOPMENTS, REICHLIN INDICATED UNEASE ABOUT SOVIET INTENTIONS THERE (AND ELSEWHERE), ALTHOUGH HE NOTED THAT THIS DID NOT MEAN THAT THE PCI WOULD MOVE TO SUPPORT WESTERN ACTIONS ON THE CONTINENT SUCH AS THE FRENCH/BELGIAN ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE IN REPELLING THE KATANGAN REBELS. THE PCI OFFICIAL REVEALED THAT THE PARTY HAS SENT DIRECTORATE MEMBER ADALBERTO MINUCCI TO BELGRADE ON AN UNPUBLICIZED MISSION TO CONSULT WITH YUGOSLAV OFFICIALS ON THE SITUATION IN AFRICA. CONCERNING OVERALL PCI FOREIGN POLICY, REICHLIN WARNED THAT THE WEST NOT BE DELUDED INTO BELIEVING THAT CRITICISM OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY ACTIONS WOULD LEAD TO PCI SUPPORT OF WESTERN POLICIES. IN ESSENCE, THE PCI IDENTIFIES MOST CLOSELY WITH THIRD-WORLD AIMS, AND REICHLIN STATED THAT IT WOULD BE IN THIS DIRECTION THAT THE PCI WOULD INCREASINGLY ORIENT ITS FOREIGN POLICY.

3. DURING THE CONVERSATION, REICHLIN, ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, EXPRESSED DIRECT AND SHARP CRITICISM OF PCI SECRETARIAT MEMBER GIAN CARLO PAJETTA, WHO IS THE PARTY'S CONFIDENTIAL

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SENIOR FOREIGN POLICY SPOKESMAN. REICHLIN INDICATED THAT PAJETTA'S MOVES, SUCH AS HIS TRIP TO ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA LAST DECEMBER, ARE OFTEN ONE-MAN BANDSTANDS, AND HE CHARACTERIZED A PAJETTA INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN L'UNITA JUNE 6 (ROME 01456 NOTAL) AS QUOTE SAYING NOTHING END QUOTE. CONCERNING THE INTERVIEW, REICHLIN SAID HE HAD EVEN RECEIVED A TELEPHONE CALL FROM PARTY SECRETARY BERLINGUER ASKING HIM TO INTERPRET PRECISELY WHAT PAJETTA HAD SAID. (COMMENT. REICHLIN'S CRITICISM OF PAJETTA IS THE SHARPEST EMBOFF HAS YET HEARD FROM ONE PCI LEADER DIRECTED TOWARDS ANOTHER. IT SUPPORTS RUMORS CIRCULATING IN ROME THAT PAJETTA'S STAR IS FALLING, AND IT COULD PRESAGE SOME MOVE TO EASE HIM OUT OF HIS FOREIGN POLICY POSITION AT THE PARTY CONGRESS PLANNED FOR EARLY NEXT YEAR. END COMMENT.)

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4. EMBOFF UTILIZED THE CONVERSATION TO REVIEW THE EMBASSY'S PERCEPTION OF INCONSISTENCIES IN THE PCI'S FOREIGN POLICIES, ESPECIALLY AS THEY HAVE RECENTLY BEEN MANIFESTED CONCERNING AFRICAN DEVELOPMENTS. HE ALSO URGED REICHLIN AND HIS COLLEAGUES TO READ CAREFULLY PRESIDENT CARTER'S ANNAPOLIS ADDRESS OF JUNE 7 ON SOVIET-US RELATIONS. ADDITIONALLY, EMBOFF NOTED NEW ROUND OF SPECULATION IN THE ITALIAN MEDIA, PARTIALLY FUELED BY PAJETTA'S ACTIVITIES IN NEW YORK, SUGGESTING A CHANGED AMERICAN ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE PCI. GIVEN THE FACT THAT THIS SPECULATION IS TOTALLY UNFOUNDED, HE OBSERVED THAT ITS CONTINUATION MIGHT CREATE THE NEED FOR US TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT ONCE AGAIN.

5. REFERENDA. REICHLIN EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THERE WOULD BE A SIZEABLE NUMBER OF VOTES IN FAVOR OF THE TWO REFERENDA
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PROPOSALS FOR ABROGATION OF THE SO-CALLED LEGGE REALE AND THE LAW PROVIDING FOR PUBLIC FINANCING OF POLITICAL PARTIES. HE THOUGHT THAT THE PERCENTAGE OF YES VOTES (PRO-ABROGATION) WOULD BE HIGHER ON THE LATTER PROPOSAL, ALTHOUGH IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT EITHER ONE WILL HAVE SUFFICIENT VOTES TO PASS. IN REICHLIN'S VIEW, A SIZEABLE

NUMBER OF YES VOTES FOR THE TWO PROPOSALS WOULD REPRESENT A PSYCHOLOGICAL SETBACK FOR ALL THE PARTIES OF THE PRESENT PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY AND COULD INTRODUCE A NEW ELEMENT OF FRICTION IN INTER-PARTY RELATIONSHIPS. HOWEVER, REICHLIN DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE REFERENDA RESULTS WOULD HAVE A SERIOUSLY DESTABILIZING EFFECT ON THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION.

6. PCI POLITICAL FORTUNES. COMMENTING ON THE RECENT PCI ELECTORAL SETBACKS, REICHLIN CONCEDED THAT THEY WERE SUBSTANTIALLY MORE SERIOUS THAN HAD BEEN EXPECTED. CONCERNING THE REASONS FOR THE LOSSES, HE SAID THAT THESE HAD BEEN AMPLY DISCUSSED BY BERLINGUER IN HIS RECENT CONFERENCE WITH LOCAL PARTY OFFICIALS (ROME 9986 NOTAL), ALTHOUGH HE STRESSED THE NEGATIVE EFFECT THAT TERRORISM IN GENERAL AND THE RED BRIGADES IN PARTICULAR HAD HAD ON THE PCI. (REICHLIN REPORTED THAT IN ONE TOWN IN SICILY--GELA--THE LOCAL PARTY ORGANIZATION HAD BEEN QUERIED BY PARTY MEMBERS AS TO WHY THE PCI HAD ORGANIZED THE KIDNAPPING AND ASSASSINATION OF DC PRESIDENT MORO.) ANALYZING THE SITUATION FURTHER, REICHLIN, POINTING TO EXTREMELY SERIOUS PROBLEMS FACING THE PARTY, OBSERVED THAT THE PCI IS CONFRONTED BY NUMEROUS FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC ENEMIES AND THAT THE PARTY HAS DISCOVERED THAT 34 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IS INSUFFICIENT TO GOVERN THE COUNTRY AND TOO LARGE FOR A PARTY TO REMAIN IN THE OPPOSITION. THE PCI OFFICIAL BELIEVES THAT IN THE LONG RUN THE PRESENT STRATEGY OF THE PARTY WILL PRODUCE THE DESIRED RESULTS, SINCE IT IS

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CORRECT, AND THEREFORE SHOULD BE CONTINUED; HOWEVER, HE DID NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITIES, EVEN IF REMOTE, OF A POLITICAL RETROGRESSION BY THE PCI AND OF A CHANGE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL IN THE EVENT THAT THE PARTY SHOULD SUFFER A STRING OF POLITICAL LOSSES. FINALLY, REICHLIN PREDICTED THAT THERE WOULD BE A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS OCCURRING DURING THE REMAINDER OF THE YEAR. PERHAPS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT, IN HIS VIEW, WAS THE ASSUMPTION OF GREATER POWER IN THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DC) BY WHAT HE TERMED A LIBERAL-DEMOCRATIC GROUP COMPOSED OF INDIVIDUALS SUCH AS SENATOR ANDREATTA AND ON. ROBERTO MAZZOTTA. OBVIOUSLY, WHILE THIS WOULD BE A NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE PCI, HE NOTED THAT IT PROBABLY WOULD LEAD TO A MORE POSITIVE AND MATURE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DC LEADERSHIP AND THE UNITED STATES. HOLMES

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